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December 1, 2005

Mike Barton, DOT&PF Commissioner
3132 Channel Dr.
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

Dear Commissioner Barton:

The draft 2006-2008 Alaska Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan does not fare well for long-planned, community transportation projects in Dillingham.

As you consider public comment and finalize the STIP, please take into account the following facts and weigh them with full and thoughtful deliberation.

Draft 2006-2008 STIP

The draft STIP programs *zero* dollars until FFY09 for two, very important road projects in Dillingham - the Wood River Road Reconstruction (Project ID 9548) and the Downtown Streets Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (Project ID 16030). And the Kanakanak Resurfacing project (Project ID 16031) was completely nixed from the STIP. I request that funding for all three of these projects be restored to a level that doesn't short circuit progress over the next three years.

These projects are long-planned and have support.

- The Curyung Tribal Council has adopted these projects in its Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Wood River Road Reconstruction & Downtown Streets Rehab are on the City of Dillingham's 2006 Capital Improvement Projects Plan (and have been for years).
- All three projects are in the Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan.
- All three projects meet the goals of the Dillingham Comprehensive Plan.
- All three projects have been on the STIP in prior years.
- Wood River Road received a PLD federal earmark of \$800,000 in 2002.

DOT STIP Program Funding & Spending Policy

Both the Wood River Road and Downtown Streets Rehab projects were programmed funds in the 2004-2006 STIP. The Wood River Road project had \$1.2MM programmed and *zero* funds



were obligated. The Downtown Street Rehab had \$625,000 programmed and only \$255,000 were obligated. I have a difficult time understanding why the DOT deemed it valid to program funds for these projects in the former STIP – and one – didn't obligate all funds - and two - determined that forward funding wasn't necessary until FFY09.

Dillingham secured a federal earmark of \$800,000 for the Wood River Road project in 2002 in order to *move the project forward*. Apparently, the earmark was spent first by DOT, as opposed

to leveraging it with programmed STIP funds to *advance* the project further. Nor was it programmed as match for this project. And *zero* funds are programmed for this project until FFY09. DOT should reconsider how it spends funds in order to maximize all resources as opposed to spending the non-STIP funds first. "Leveraging" is the new buzz word in the world of project management and I believe DOT should adopt this practice. And if it's a function of lack of staff time, then perhaps work should be contracted out in order to keep projects moving forward.

It's taken a lot of time, energy, public process and citizen involvement to get these projects to where they are today.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Harlan Willis, Jr.
Dillingham Planning Commission, Chairman